Grade 4 (page 1)

**Drawing Horses**

I'd give anything to draw horses the way Euphemia Tucker does. She draws them in the margins of spelling tests and on the back of her math homework. They're always running wild and free, their [manes](http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/manes) manes (mā`nēz), in Roman religion, spirits of the dead. Originally, they were called *di manes,* a collective divinity of the dead. Manes could also refer to the realm of the dead and, later, to the individual souls of the dead. swirling over the paper like clouds across the sky.

Euphemia's horses look so real you can almost feel their breath on your face.

Luke Anderson, who sits next to me, says he can't decide whether my horses look more like Great Danes or kitchen tables. He also calls me Messy. I prefer Marisa, which is my real name, to Missy, which is what everyone--except Luke--calls me. If I could draw like Euphemia, I'd sign all my pictures Marisa. Nobody messes with Euphemia's name, not even Luke Anderson.

Today I sharpened my pencil and took a clean sheet of paper out of my desk. Then I closed my eyes and pictured one of Euphemia's perfect horses rearing up and pawing the air with its sharp [hooves](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/hooves) hooves   
*n.*  
A plural of hoof.

hooves  
*Noun*  
  
a plural of **hoof**  
  
hooves hoof . I could see it so clearly I was sure I'd be able to draw it this time.

I started with what I do best: a big, [billowing](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/billowing) bil·low *n.*  
**1.** A large wave or swell of water.  
  
**2.** A great swell, surge, or undulating mass, as of smoke or sound.  
  
*v.* **bil·lowed**, **bil·low·ing**, **bil·lows**  
  
*v.intr.*  
**1.** [mane](http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/mane) mane  
  
the region of long coarse hair at the dorsal border of the neck and terminating at the poll in the forelock. Present in the horse and other Equidae. Similar gatherings of coarse hairs are present in the giraffe, gnu, various antelope, cheetah and lion. Called also juba. . Next I roughed in most of the body and drew a long tail streaming out behind. It really wasn't turning out half bad until I got to the front-legs-pawing-the-air part, which looked more like two macaroni noodles with macaroni: see pasta. tiny marshmallows for hooves.

I tried again, but the hooves still didn't seem right, and rather than doing them over and over, I erased them and went on to the head. That was when I really ran into trouble.

First I drew some great donkey ears, followed by sheep ears, pig ears, [kangaroo](http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Kangaroo)kangaroo, name for a variety of hopping marsupials, or pouched mammals, of the family Macropodidae, found in Australia, Tasmania, and New Guinea. The term is applied especially to the large kangaroos of the genus *Macropus.*   
**.....** **Click the link for more information.** ears ... everything except horse ears. I erased again and again until I had rubbed a hole in the paper. That was when Luke Anderson poked his nose over my shoulder.

"Hey, Messy," he said. "What are you drawing? It looks like a [T. rex](http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/T.+rex) with a Mohawk.” **T. rex**, **T. Rex** or **T-Rex** may refer to:

* *Tyrannosaurus rex*, a large carnivorous dinosaur
* *Tachyoryctes rex*, the King Mole Rat
* *Thoristella rex*, a species of *Thoristella*
* *Trialeurodes rex*

I scratched a big X through my earless, macaroni-legged horse, wadded it up into a little ball, and stuffed it under the lid of my desk.

I was still upset when I got off the school bus this afternoon. I walked past the neighbors' horses standing in the field next to our house. They've been in that field for as long as I can remember. Their [stringy](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/stringy) string·y   
*adj.* **string·i·er**, **string·i·est**  
**1.** Consisting of, resembling, or containing strings or a string.  
  
**2.** Slender and sinewy; wiry.  
  
**3.** Forming strings, as a viscous liquid; ropy. manes never float into the sky. Their ragged old tails hang straight down to the ground, and I've never seen them run. Every few minutes they stamp their feet [to knock off](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/To+knock+off) to cease, as from work; to desist.  
- De Quincey.  
  
To force off by a blow or by beating.  
To assign to a bidder at an auction, by a blow on the counter.  
To leave off (work, etc.).  
  
See also: Knock Knock Knock Knock the fire ants, which is how I know they're alive.

Euphemia probably has her own herd of wild stallions. I bet they run right past her bedroom window.

Grade 4 (page 2)

I brooded about it all through dinner. After I'd helped clear the dishes, I sat down with a stack of typing paper and a freshly sharpened pencil. Without Luke Anderson there to pester me, I hoped I'd have better luck. I practiced a few horses' heads, trying to get the ears right. Then my mother walked by, carrying a basket of laundry.

"Nice dogs, Missy," she said. "Is that one a [German shepherd](http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/German+shepherd)German shepherd, breed of large, muscular working dog perfected in Germany at the turn of the 20th cent. It stands about 25 in. (64 cm) high at the shoulder and weighs from 60 to 85 lb (27.2–38.5 kg).   
**.....** Click the link for more information.?"

I slammed my pencil against the table, hard. My dad looked up from his magazine.

"Was it something I said?" Mama asked.

I tossed all the dog heads into the trash and walked outside. The sun had just sunk below the horizon, [feathering](http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/feathering)The appearance of jagged edges on moving objects in an interlaced display. Also known as "combing," this artifact is created because the image moves from one video field (odd lines displayed) to the next video field (even lines filled in while odd lines still present).   
**.....** Click the link for more information. the whole sky with pink and orange wisps. Everything looked special in that light, even the [scraggly](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/scraggly)scrag·gly   
*adj.* **scrag·gli·er**, **scrag·gli·est**  
Ragged; unkempt.  
  
**Adj.** **1.** **scraggly** - lacking neatness or order; "the old man's scraggly beard"; "a scraggly little path to the door"   
**.....** Click the link for more information. horses next door.

I dragged a lawn chair over to the fence and sat down to take a better look at them. They'd never be free spirits like Euphemia's horses, but they did seem patient and strong. I noticed the curves of their muscles, the shadows on their faces, the shine along their backs. Their colors reminded me of dessert--rich chocolate, deep cinnamon, creamy caramel.

I was just sitting there, feeling kind of dazzled by the unexpected beauty of it all, when I remembered the big box of pastels my grandmother had sent for my birthday.

"For Marisa," the card had said, "because she is such a bright and colorful person."

An idea began to take shape in my mind, and just then the cinnamon horse turned its head toward me and nodded three times. It was like a sign.

I hurried into the house, grabbed the pastels and some paper, and raced for the door.

"Whoa, there, Missy," my dad said. "What's the rush?"

"Gotta run," I explained. "The sun is going down!"

I choose a deep brown, pulling it across my paper in the shape of the chocolate horse. It comes out right the first time, even the legs and ears! Drawing horses is easier when they're right in front of you, and I'll say this for the ones next door--they hold their poses.

The sky is turning out just as I'd hoped, too; all the pinks and reds blending together like a strawberry parfait, and I love the way the caramel horse's mane is blowing, just barely, in the wind.

It doesn't look exactly like one of Euphemia's horses, of course. But I already know that when this drawing is finished, I'll be signing it Marisa.

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